133 At this time each of the creeks was at its height; they are deep and rapid, and four of them much wider than Tule river.[35]

The condition of the country between the territory of the Wukchumni and Gawia on the Kaweah River and that of the tribes on Kings River was much as it is now (save for oases of agriculture made possible by modern irrigation), and the region seems to have been without native villages, the area probably being used only for hunting and seed-gathering.

[312 311]

On the 15th and 16th of May, Derby's party completed the crossing of the Kaweah sloughs (the "four creeks"), left the Cowees (Gawia) on the 17th and headed for Kings River.

[134] ... our course lay over a barren sandy plain, interspersed here and there with spots of vegetation, but in general a perfect contrast to the rich soil upon the river Francis [the Kaweah]. About 6 miles from the fifth creek we observed four isolated hills or buttes about six hundred feet high, two of them ranging nearly north and south, and about two miles apart. At the first of these is a constant spring of water....We arrived upon the banks of the Kings River at about 5 P.M., having travelled 23.66 miles in a direct line across the plains.[36]

After a day spent on Kings River, probably at about the present site of Centerville, having ridden up the north bank about fifteen miles and having talked with one or two white men established at the ferry, Derby wrote as follows.

The Kings River is the largest stream in the valley, at this time of spring floods about three hundred yards wide, with a rapid current and water cold as ice. It is about sixty miles in length, rising in two branches high up in the Sierra, which uniting about forty miles from its mouth flow in a southwest direction through the hills and valley, and empty into the Tache [Tulare] lake at its northeast extremity. Its banks are high and well timbered, and the country in its immediate vicinity is apparently fertile. It forms five sloughs like the Francis, but they are much wider and the country between them is swampy and difficult of access. There are no less than seventeen rancherias of Indians upon this river, numbering in all probably about three thousand, including those situated among the hills of the vicinity. Of these those living upon the lower part of the river are friendly and well disposed toward the whites; those high up among the hills are entirely ignorant, treacherous and mischievous I was informed by Colonel Hampton, at the upper ferry, that the Cho-e-minee [Choinimni] rancheria, situated in his

[161 361]

[648 181]

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[35] Ibid., 257.

[36] Ibid., 258-260.

586 children. In a sense, the arrangement depended on the solidity of the establishment: "it was easier for him to get out" (M.L.). On the other hand, a woman might "get mad and go home and take her babies" (M.L.). Children who were weaned, say of five years and over, went to either grandparents' home. The parents-in-law and the separating spouses discussed these arrangements. Often the children shifted about or went into the new homes of either parent when they remarried.

[585] Infidelity, especially on the woman's part, was not overlooked. Although virginity was not essential at marriage, constancy was expected 586 from a wife. The husband was entirely within 837 his rights in fighting and even killing the wife's lover. M.L. said that, if the lover had a wife, she too would "come out and fight the other woman." In other words, offended spouse [579] fought offending spouse of the same sex. When women fought they hit each other with their digging sticks or rock-lifters, pulled hair, and gouged with their long fingernails.[246]

When the husband was unfaithful, the wife "couldn't do much" (M.P.). "She might get mad and go home but it didn't do any good if her husband didn't like her anyway" (M.L.). As [181] usual in Yokuts culture, personality, not regulation, resolved each case according to circumstances.

586 Divorced men and women were entirely free to remarry, although protests might arise, and be ignored, from the parents of a wronged spouse. There was no return of espousal gifts, M.L. said, in broken betrothals (but one suspects that quarrels may have resulted if an equivalent value were not eventually returned to the losing family at some time; see the Chukchansi, Pt. II).

587 The levirate was commonly practised, but was not compulsory; the sororate was known but less common.

Widows remained single one to two years, a widower three months to one year. Again, personal desires and circumstances affected one's actions; the periods named were those conventionally recognized or expectable.

The Transvestite

838 The berdache had a special place in Yokuts [767] society as a handler and burier of the dead and singer of mourning songs. But of the Wukchumni informants interviewed only M.L. would admit their existence. She stated that a paternal uncle of hers was a transvestite. He dressed as a woman, gathered and pounded acorns, and made baskets in the company of women. The informant's grandmother told her not to make any objection to his presence on their seed-

[246] M.L. said women often "got mad over their cooking" and a winatum would come around and make them keep quiet -- these were verbal battles.

276 the ear; only men smoked, the tobacco being pulverized seed, not leaves.[15]

323 Pottery (ki·wáš).---Clay, red clay, and clay dishes were called by the single term kiwáš; the clay pipe was šokmai. In the old days many old women made pottery. They went after the clay with a carrying net and digging stick. They "dug around until they got the right kind" [presumably with the correct admixture of sand], although they knew the best of the many places to go. The clay was laid on an old deerskin, put in the net, and taken home where it was given a thorough pounding on a bedrock mortar (pe·šán, acorn pounding place). The details of building up and finishing a pot P.D.W. could not describe well: the process was coiling, as elsewhere among Yokuts. After the pots were dried, they were fired in a pit filled with coals. This "took all morning" [probably longer]. [I failed to ask about a "slip" of gruel or of any other material.]

372 Firemaking.---Striking a fire (šike·tál) by means of rock or flint sparks in old times was never heard of by P.D.W. The "only way" to make fire was a buckeye board [hearth] called tu·pun (buckeye) and a pointed stick [drill] of white oak called še·ktaš. The drill was twirled between the palms, the hearth held down with the left foot.

GAMES

526 [181] Mayfield, who found his Choinimni hosts a jolly, fun-loving lot, describes several of their games. There was a gaming court near the center of each village; this was smoothed, tamped (stamped?), and covered with sand, and here an exhilarated crowd of players and spectators was often gathered.

Boys amused themselves by tossing dummy ducks of bark on the river and shooting them with arrows or throwing spears at them.

Pierced hoop and pole.---The pole was 10 feet long, the disc about 1-1/2 feet in diameter with a center hole of 2-3 inches. This disc was made up of rolled bark wound with split willow. This game was played by all, sometimes as many as thirty players, in sides 20 to 30 feet apart. As the disc was rolled from one side to the other, all tossed their poles at it. If the hoop was pierced, it [802] counted 2; if knocked over, 1. A scorekeeper called out the tally. Incidentally, counting was in the decimal system as with other Yokuts.

Stone disc and arrow.---A perforated stone disc, 3 to 4 inches in diameter, also used for arrow-straightening, was rolled across the court, and arrows were shot at it by young men. Scoring was like that for hoop and pole.

Other diversions were rolling globular stones into a hole and casting flat stones at a line.

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[15] Ibid.

1: Gayton E-5 (1925-1930) 1948 NS29 Yokuts NS29
[P. 239b] Western Mono NS 25

W Y 787

the dreamer and will be used henceforth for all time. [See dreams recorded below.]

6. Return to bed, but do not sleep under any circumstances.

7. Get up in the morning as usual, but do not bathe or eat.

8. Select some secluded spot outside of the village and start for it in time to arrive not a moment later than high noon.

9. When there, at noon, again address the dream helper, asking its aid, asking it to come again in dreams.

10. Speak respectfully to the sun, moon, and stars, when seen at such times of address or prayer.

11. Refrain from eating meat or grease in any form. Acorn mush and gruel is the regular diet during such quest periods.

This routine was continued as long as one wished but, if one were deeply serious, one might also:

W Y [821] [778]

12. Drink jimsonweed every spring.

13. Go off alone to bask in the sun [advisable but not essential]. Doctors often went out to lie down in the sun. S.O. today (1926) spends much of his time sitting in the sunshine beside his house, fingering and stroking his eagle-down talisman (fig. 2 herein). He attributes his good health to his doing this: "the sun hears and knows everything, both day and night."

W Y 787 782 ● 181

The ordinary person who sought dream power but had no intention of becoming a shaman did

W Y [778]

Fig. 2. Sacred talisman of abalone shell and eagle-down cord belonging to Michahai informant S.O.

[P. 240a] Wash. Mono VS25

W Y 787 782 181

so to obtain longevity. A man, like S.O., could ask his dream helper to cure or aid some other person, often a young relative, without being considered a real shaman. The desire for good health and long life was a common one; as voiced in prayerful address to the sun, moon, and stars it usually ran something like this: "I see you [Sun], I see you all the time. Help me to have a good life." Water, particularly that of springs, was thought to be immortal -- "it is everywhere all the time" -- and, if dreamed of, was a sponsor of longevity. Whenever S.O. came upon a little spring or creek he "sprinkled a little bit on himself so he would live long."

W Y 787 778 776

The dream, the dream helper, and the talismans used to represent the helper were all called by the same term, ainič. The talisman was usually some part of the animal dreamed of, and while, as a profane object, it might be secured by purchase, it was nevertheless sacred and empowered with the supernatural force, t'ipni. Once it became a talisman, it was never sold.

A dream helper could visit only one person at a time, but yet might visit several persons the same night. [The likelihood of many persons having the same dream the same night is slight; and the fact might not happen to be disclosed, as such matters were not spoken of in open or common conversation.] When a talisman of a certain helper has been used once, it loses its power and must be redreamed. Hence the need for several dream helpers and talismans if one wanted much and dependable supernatural power. Talismans were loaned among friends and worked as well for another as for the owner. (Wukchumni mention thefts of these.) But they were never sold. Shamans frequently assisted each other by lending talismans, or, retaining them themselves, used them to help another accomplish his purpose.[178]

W Y [425]

W Y 787 828

As to the nature of dreaming, S.O. could only say that it was one's spirit moving about and having the experience. "When you go to sleep, you walk around some place. I have gone off to those springs around here lots of times. Your spirit [aha 'bawa, Michahai] goes anywhere." It is the ahabawa that has all dream experience; people who sept in dreams are ahabawa. To illustrate this further S.O. said he once had a home in Drum Valley where he was very happy, living with his wife, and after her death he continued to live there with his mother-in-law. Now, even today, his ahabawa goes over there: he sees the place, although he is blind and he knows the house is no longer there. He often

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[178] This was especially true when shamans allied for nefarious purposes (cf. Gayton, Yokuts-Mono Chiefs and Shamans, 393).

2: Kroeber E-5 (ca. 1918) 1953
NS29 Yokuts NS29

Much the same must be said of music, only in a still stronger degree. Some differences of external form, or involved system, are apparent between the songs of various parts of California. But as long as no exact analysis has been rendered, and especially as long as no one has approached this music with any desire to enter into its essential spirit, comparisons between the aesthetic value of the inclinations and achievements of this and that tribe are empty.

Southern Yokuts men sometimes played the musical bow after settling themselves in bed; the Chukchansi in mourning the dead. These may be but two expressions of one employment. Modern forms of the instrument have a peg key for adjusting the tension, or are made on cornstalks. In old days a true shooting bow, or a separate instrument made on the model of a bow, was used. *Mawu*, or *mawuci*, was its name. One end was held in the mouth, while the lone string was tapped, not plucked, with the nail of the index finger; the melody, audible to himself only, was produced by changes in the size of the resonance chamber formed by the player's oral cavity.

THE TYPE OF YOKUTS CIVILIZATION.

The affiliations of Yokuts civilization are nearly equal in all directions. To the north, their system of totemic moieties connects them with the Miwok while certain detailed elements of their culture, such as the Y-frame cradle and the magpie headdress, link them definitely with the Maidu. To the east their twined basketry has close relations as far as the remoter edge of the Great Basin. Toward the Shoshonean and Yuman south there are innumerable threads: the Jimson weed ritual, the arrow straightener, the carrying net, to mention only a few. Toward the west the decay of Salinan and Chumash culture makes exact comparison difficult, but what little is known of the former people evidences a strong Yokuts impress, while with the nearer Chumash relations of trade were close and must have brought many approaches of custom in their train. *It is difficult to say where the most numerous and most basic links* stretch.

Equally impressive, however, are the features distinctive of the civilization of the Yokuts, or rather of the group composed of themselves and their smaller and less known Shoshonean neighbors on the immediate east and south. These specialties include the true tribal organization, the duality of chieftainship, the regulated functions of transvestites, the coordinated animal pantheon, the eagle-down skirt, the constricted coiled basket, a distinctive pottery, and the communal house, to mention only a few points.

It thus seems that the Yokuts were a nation of considerable individuality. It appears throughout California that the dwellers in

2: Kroeber E-5 (ca. 1918) 1953
NS29 Yokuts NS29

the larger valleys, though they were the first to crumble at the touch of the Caucasian, elaborated a more complex culture than the hill tribes; and the Yokuts were a lowland people in a greater measure than any other stock in California.

But it is also evident that wherever the soil of history is really penetrated in California a rich variety of growths is found. If a little mountain group like the Yuki, placed between more highly civilized nations, has been able to evolve feature after feature of cultural distinctness, there is every reason to believe that the same would prove to be true of nearly all the California tribes, if only we really knew them; and a large, compact, and prosperous block of people like the Yokuts would be exceptional only in having carried the development of their originality somewhat farther than the majority.

It so happens that in the long stretch of land between the Maidu and the Luiseño no tribe has yet been exhaustively studied with any array of information. It is therefore inevitable that the present account of the Yokuts, the first rendered in any detail, scattered as that is, should reveal many novelties. But there is nothing to encourage the belief that if the Miwok, the Tübatulabal, the Serrano, or the Salinans had happened to be chosen, there would have been any notably less quantity of interesting peculiarities revealed; not to mention that for the Pomo and Chumash, little known as they are, we have every indication of a civilizational richness greater, if anything, than that evinced by the Yokuts.

In other words, the exact understanding of the Indian history of California still lies before us. Some foundations may have been laid for it in the present work. The outlines were sketched for all time 40 years ago by the masterly hand of Stephen Powers. But the real structure will be a gift of the future; and its materials can only be assembled by investigations far more intensive, as well as continuous, than those yet undertaken.

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3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

FOREWORD

The Yokuts or Yokoch Indians and F. F. Latta are an extraordinary combination.

This great Indian nationality once held the whole floor of the San Joaquin Valley, plus much of the adjoining foothill belt on both sides. Numbering some eighteen to twenty thousand souls, they were clustered into nearly fifty independent local tribes, mostly friendly to one another. Though each tribe definitely held its own delimited territory, there was constant visiting and return visiting, as nature according to season most bountifully provided fish, fowl, game, seeds, acorns or roots once here and then there. In their three hundred miles of range, the Yokuts were the most extensive as they were perhaps the most populous of the many diverse nationalities of aboriginal California. Each Yokuts tribe spoke its own slightly divergent dialect or sub-dialect; but all the way from Stockton to Bakersfield there prevailed at least partial intelligibility. Customs and institutions evinced a similar basic uniformity, varied by local peculiarities of detail, over the total stretch of the San Joaquin Valley. They were a tall, well built people of open outlook, were the Yokuts: frank, up-standing, casual and unceremonious, optimistic and friendly, fond of laughter, not given to cares of property or too much worry about tomorrow; and they lived in direct simple relation to their land and world, to its animals, spirits, and gods, and to one another.

F. F. Latta, the friend and historian of the Yokuts, is one of those rare beings—a natural-born ethnographer. That means he is a describer of other peoples' exotic ways and customs, an interpreter of their temperaments, a sympathetic reporter of their fortunes. Born and raised in the Great Valley, and long one of its better-known educators, he understands locale and environment, whites as well as Indians. In his observations, he is not only meticulous, but remarkably reliable. The accuracy of his accounts has particularly impressed me, for I studied the Yokuts too, between 1900 and 1910, at a time when far more of

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

the entire area was occupied, although probably not by such great numbers as was the east side of the valley.

Concerning these west side tribes there is, of course, practically nothing known. Few hints as to their names and habits have been left by the Spanish missionaries in their records concerning the tribes taken from that territory. This lack of data is due to the fact that the entire west side was stripped of Indians upon the completion of the missions to the west, probably before the year 1806. With one or two exceptions, they never returned to that area, it being too open to the invasions of the Spanish, whose advances were not welcomed by those primitive people.

THE NORTHERN YOKUTS

One of the most marked characteristics of the Yokuts people concerned their organization into tribes, and their establishment of definite boundaries for each tribe. This is not common to all California primitive groups, nor to primitive groups in other portions of the United States.

Beginning at the northern end of the San Joaquin Valley the tribes were distributed roughly as follows: According to F. W. Hodge, *Handbook of North American Indians*, the *Yachikamni* Yokuts occupied the territory surrounding present Stockton. *Tchikimisi*, on the south side of the Cosumne River, and *Tawi*, on the lower San Joaquin River, were Yachikamni villages.

In addition to the Cosumne and Mokelumne who are by some authorities classed as *Miwok*, there were along the Stanislaus river the *Tuolumne*, although their name was given to a river further south. According to J. C. Frémont the *Auxumne* lived on the Merced River. The *Chulamni* are reported on the Stockton plains.

The first tribe about which anything definite is known is the *Chauchila*, for which the anglicized Chowchilla has been substituted. These people were the only warlike tribe of Yokuts. They ranged along the Chowchilla River from the San Joaquin River on the west to the Sierra foothills on the east.

The *Heuchi* claimed Fresno River from the San Joaquin River to the foothills. Their village of *Chekayu* was located on the north bank of Fresno River, about four miles below present Madera. Above the Heuchi, on the south side of Fresno River, were the *Chukchansi*, a foothill tribe.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

territory in which they lived. On the basis of their differences, they are readily classified into three types of cultures.

Probably the most numerous and important of these cultures was one which we will call the River Culture. Typical of this culture were the *Nutunutu* of Kings River near Laton, the *Telumne* of Mill Creek where Visalia now stands, the *Kaweah* of the Venice or Kaweah Hills district north of Exeter, and the *Yowlumne* of Kern River. These people were probably more abundantly supplied with fish, game and plant food than were any of the others. They lived among beautiful surroundings and were noted for the beautiful designs and wonderful workmanship of their basketry. These river people were at home beside these broad quiet streams beneath the oak trees which towered often one hundred and fifty feet in the air, and among whose branches the woodpecker, blue jay, wood duck, magpie and dozens of other birds were constantly clamoring. They lived in permanent houses and wandered about but little. During the acorn season a few of them might go to the mountains for several weeks. From time to time they might take part with some of the tribes to the south in surrounding antelope, or driving jack rabbits, but they were not a migratory people. Probably seventy-five per cent of their number lived to a ripe old age without ever having been as much as fifteen miles from the place where they were born.

These river tribes were the most affluent of the three cultures. Historical data preserved would indicate that they were probably more intelligent than the other tribes as well as more friendly and dependable. Although practically all of the Yokuts were noted for their friendly, open disposition, the river tribes were probably more playful, jolly, hospitable and happy-go-lucky than were any of the others. Living in one place among plenty, they were also more likely to become burdened with flesh than were the other tribes.

The following extract from the 1845 *Report to Congress* by J. C. Frémont is of interest. It describes members of the Nutunutu subtribe of Yokuts on lower Kings River in 1845. They were a typical river people:

"On the opposite side we found forty or fifty Indians, who had come to meet us from the village below. We made them some small presents, and invited them to accompany us to our encampment which, after about three miles through fine oak groves, we made on the river.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

"I remember that in the fall of 1855 my brother, Anderson Akers, and I were riding along the east side of Tulare Lake when we met a group of about fifteen Indians coming toward us on the same trail we were traveling. The year before, the surrounding cattlemen and the U.S. Cavalry had rounded up almost all of the lake Indians and taken them to an Indian Reservation on the Kings River. A few had sneaked back and were hiding in the tules around the lake shore. These Indians knew we were their friends, or they would have hidden when they saw us coming. They stepped off the trail and stood quietly among the salt brush as we rode up, their baskets and bundles resting on the ground.

"We were within ten feet of the closest Indian before my horse saw them. He probably smelled them before he saw them. Anyway, the first thing I knew he almost jumped out of his skin. He landed in the brush about six feet off the trail and snorted like he had seen a ghost. He came the nearest thing possible to unloading me right there in the trail. If I hadn't pulled leather for all I was worth, that is exactly what he would have done. I hadn't seen an Indian until after he landed.

"We talked with the Indians for a few minutes. They were very anxious about the Cavalry, but we assured them there was none in the country. It was very cold and they were bundled up in rabbit skins. Their faces were about all you could see of them. The brush hid their legs, which were the only bare part of them.

"As we left the Indians and rode on along the trail I looked back. Although they were less than fifty yards away, I could scarcely distinguish them, and wouldn't have distinguished them at all if they hadn't been moving. They were as excited as Indians get, waving their arms, laughing and talking to each other. Several times one of the grown boys would jump high into the air with his hands clasped in front of him like he was hanging on to a saddle horn, and land in the brush five or six feet off the trail. It was easy to see what they were laughing and talking about."

THE PLAINS PEOPLE

The Plains Culture is probably best represented by the *Chauchila* tribe, which ranged in what is now known as Madera County. This tribe has been known since its earliest contact with white people for its hostile attitude and horse stealing tendencies.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

175 609 648 towards the village. Anxious for the safety of the men left behind, I profited by the surprise to withdraw towards our camp; checking the Indians by an occasional rifle shot, with the range of which they seemed to think they were acquainted.

"They followed us to the camp and scattered around among the rocks and trees, whence they harangued us, bestowing on us liberally all the epithets they could use, telling us what they would do with us.

"Many of them had been Mission Indians and spoke Spanish well. 'Wait,' they said—*'Esperate Carrajos'*—'wait until morning'. There are two big villages up in the mountains close by; we have sent for the Chief; he'll be down before morning with all the people, and you will all die. None of you shall go back; we will have all your horses'.

175 648 "The Horse-thief tribes have been 'Christian Indians' of the Missions, and when these were broken up by Mexico the Indians took to the mountains. Knowing well the coast country, and the exact situation of the Missions where they had lived and the ranchos and the range which their horses were accustomed to, they found it easy to drive off the animals into the [262] mountains, partly to use as saddle-horses, but principally to eat.

"In time they became a scourge to the settlement. The great ranges which belonged with the ranchos not only supported many thousands of cattle, but also many hundreds of horses which were divided into bands, *'Manadas'*. The Indians were the vaqueros or herdsmen who attended to both herding the cattle and breaking in the colts.

"The Californians had great pleasure in their horses. On some ranchos there would be several hundred saddle-horses, in bands of eighty or a hundred of different colors; *Alazan* (sorrel) always the favorite color. Deprived of their regular food, the Indians took to the mountains and began to drive off horses. Cattle would not drive fast enough to avoid the first pursuit. In their early condition they had learned to eat wild horse-meat and liked it. Familiarity with the whites and the success of their predatory excursions made the Horse-thief Indians far [181 184] more daring and braver than those who remained in fixed villages, whether in the mountains or on the valley streams which carried the name of the different tribes—The *Cosumné, Mokelumné*, and *Auxumné* (Merced) Rivers. Probably all the streams if their Indian names could have been known received their names from the small tribes who lived upon them.

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Yowlumne

Before it was disturbed by white people, Reeder Hill extended diagonally across where the present Santa Fe passenger station is located from about the center of the court yard between the High School shops, to the intersection of Sixteenth and D streets. A branch of Kern River ran close by the west end of Reeder Hill. It actually came almost to the intersection of Truxtun Avenue and A streets.

When Colonel Thomas Baker came to the site of present Bakersfield in 1863, a large group of Yowlumne Indians lived in the two villages, one on each side of the river at the west end of Reeder Hill. The late Thomas A. Baker told me that his father, Colonel Thomas Baker, for whom the City of Bakersfield is named, often sent him down to Reeder Hill to bring Indians to work at their home. This log home stood near the intersection of Nineteenth and M streets. These Indians, the most willing often being men, made gardens, washed clothes, scrubbed floors, mended clothes, cut firewood, cared for children and did all sorts of housework. They were the first baby sitters in Bakersfield.

Other Yowlumne villages and camping sites were scattered about the plains near where Bakersfield is now located. But they were not permanent villages, as the Indians were forced to move when high water flooded the plains adjoining the sloughs and branches of Kern River, and also when the flow of Kern River switched from one slough or branch to another.

Soon after white people began to settle on the site of present Bakersfield, the Yowlumne began calling the locality *Wawlu*, meaning Planting Place. This was because the white settlers began planting crops.

THE YOWLUMNE INDIANS

The *Yowlumne* were a typical Yokuts group. Their language was almost identical with that of nearby Yokuts tribes. They were, like the rest, a happy, friendly, dependable people. The first settlers on lower Kern River found it perfectly safe to to take them into their pioneer homes to perform housework of all kinds. This was true of both men and women, for often the Yowlumne men did washing, dishwashing and the scrubbing of floors as willingly as did the women.

At this time, 1949, there are two full-blood Yowlumne Indians still living. This will come as a surprise to some readers,

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

526 white settlers before such data was gathered. When such work was begun, gaming had almost passed out of existence, and as a result, rules, names and other details had been forgotton. However, it can easily be seen from the amount of information [181] presented upon these pages that the Yokuts were not the sullen, undemonstrative people we imagine them, but were, instead, a laughing, carefree, gaming race.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

the reader not see what happened one morning during the spring freshet many years ago?

The swollen stream suddenly broke from its old course upstream and cut a new channel in a different direction. At the Yokuts village the morning sun rose on a river channel devoid of water. The entire village was aroused. Their world had fallen about them. All medicine men were assembled and implored to bring the water back into the old channel. All charm-stones were gathered. The ceremony described by Mary J. Gates was performed by the inhabitants of an entire village who, if the stream failed to flow again, must in a few hours begin a march to the new channel. Although the singing and dancing went on throughout the day and night, no water came. So the stones were buried as an offering to the Tripne powers, and the migration was begun.

Incidentally, the publication written by Mary J. Gates and overlooked for more than fifty years, is one of the most substantial data available extending the range of northern Yokuts tribes into the Santa Clara Valley and toward the coast, where some authorities have long placed them.

From the depth at which this old village on Section 15 was buried it may be thought that the site was abandoned centuries ago. This may have been the case, but not necessarily. In recent years one ten-hour dust storm has been known to build mounds higher than the one which had accumulated above the old village site.

THE RATTLESNAKE DANCE

Students of the Yokuts Indians are surprised to learn that those simple, jolly people had developed a rattlesnake dance. Little is known as to whether or not this dance was performed on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. *Yoimut*, last surviving full-blood *Chunut* Yokuts, stated that members of the *Tulamni* tribe took part in a rattlesnake dance held in Tejon Canyon about 1865. It is possible that they had always attended the dances in Tejon Canyon.

From Tejon Canyon as far north as the San Joaquin River the Rattlesnake Dance was performed by Yokuts tribes until historic times. Aged Yokuts have related stories about such dances held at Dunlap, Squaw Valley, Drumm Valley, Kings River, Eshom Valley, Antelope Valley, Lemon Cove, Tule River, Deer Creek, Poso Creek, Kern River, and Tejon

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

CHAPTER XIII

INDIAN STATEMENTS

PAHMIT'S STORY

Almost all of the material in the preceding sketches concerning San Joaquin Valley Indians has been taken from statements made by aged Yokuts Indians, or by aged white pioneers who settled among the Yokuts before they were disturbed by white people. To present an intimate picture of the Yokuts it is best to include a few stories just as they were related to me by aged Indians.

The following self-explanatory statement was taken from Pahmit in 1928:

I born *Kuyu* (Koo'-you) *Illik*, long time 'go. Kuyu Illik [Sulphur Water] Indian village bank river white man call San Joaquin. Village at place white man call Fort Miller where soldiers march.

My people belong *Dumna* (Doom'-nah) tribe Indian. I don't know how much old me. White man say I more than hundred. I know when soldiers, Major Savage come Kuyu Illik make Indian sign paper, [1851], I young man 'bout twenty-one, twenty-two years old.

My people live happy 'till soldiers come. We have plenty eat. We have nice dry houses live in. We don't fight. Lots our people live along river above Kuyu Illik. Lots antelope, lots elk, lots wild horses come river, drink below Kuyu Illik where Friant now.

My grandpa, *Tom'-kit*, chief all Indian tribe 'round Kuyu Illik. We want meat; he send two, three Indian; good shot with bow, arrow, get it. They hide in rocks by river, wait antelope, elk. Antelope come. They shoot six, eight nice fat ones. They shoot one each house Kuyu Illik. They let rest run 'way. We have all meat we want. When white man come, he shoot, shoot, shoot. Kill all antelope. Kill all elk. Then he bring cattle, make Indian buy beef.

When Indian get hungry, he go with gun shoot some quail, maybe cotton tail, maybe dove. White man 'rest him, put in jail. Now my people no keep gun. They no have rifle; they no have shotgun in house. When my people shoot, white man 'rest him.

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I am the last full-blood Chunut left. My children are part Spanish. I am the only one who knows the whole Chunut or Wowol language. When I am gone no one will have it. I have to be the last one.

All my life I want back our good old home on Tulare Lake. But I guess I can never have it. I am a very old Chunut [eighty-five years] now and I guess I can never see the old days again.

Now my daughter and her Mexican husband work in the cotton fields around Tulare and Waukena. Cotton, cotton, cotton, that is all that is left. Chunuts cannot live on cotton. They cannot sing their old songs and tell their old stories where there is nothing but cotton. My children feel foolish when I sing my songs. But I sing anyway:

Toke'-uh lih'-muh *Wa'-tin-hin nah yo'*
(west side) (show me the straight path)

Hi-yo-um'-ne *a-he* *oo-nook* *mi-uh'-wah*
(my home (this is I) (the charm stone) (over you)
Indian village)

That is all. [Yoimut died in Hanford in 1933.]

THE END OF THE TRAIL

In leaving the topic of Yokuts Indians, which has been presented upon these pages in a rather informal manner, it is perhaps best that a brief summary be made of Indian character itself and of some things which vitally concern those Indians who still survive.

One of the alleged Indian characteristics is that of improvidence. It is claimed that the Indians generally do not look to the future and are not able to carry themselves through from season to season without being in want. How generally true this may have been in primeval days, I have no way of knowing. I do know, however, that those Yokuts Indians who still remained suffered less during the recent depression than many of their white neighbors. Their services were much in demand, they worked almost every day, and commanded the highest wages of all common laborers in their territory. It is not meant that they had the finest automobile in the locality, nor that they lived in the finest house, because they certainly did not. They had no automobile, and they camped under the trees, using tents and brush shelters, but they were comfortable and happy and were well supplied with provisions.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

It is the nature of the Yokuts to look to someone for counsel and advise. In the old days the chief of the tribe was the person who acted in the capacity of general advisor. It is believed that he held his position through his natural ability and through the tendency of the majority of the people around him to come to him for advice.

Members of the tribe were inclined to wait for the chief to determine when to gather the various foodstuffs, and when to move from one seasonal location to another. It is said by some pioneers that the chief often told his people where to build their houses, and sometimes when and whom to marry. If the foregoing describes conditions in general, the Indians, however voluntarily, were too much ruled.

Unless suggestions are made to the ordinary Indian, he is unable to meet a new situation, one to which he is a stranger and untrained, but he is quick to act upon the suggestion of anyone whose advice he values. This is probably not so true of the families of chiefs or headmen, who commonly inter-married between tribes. They were more versatile, had more initiative, and were better able to adjust themselves to the great upheaval caused by the coming of the white man.

Because of this need of leadership Indians have been accused of being lazy. According to the standard of the white man this is in many cases quite true. But I have known many exceptions, especially where Indians have had the guidance of dependable and well meaning whites. The Indian sees no earthly use for a large percentage of the things white people do, so, when left to himself, he doesn't do them.

About the disappearance of the Indian there is much to be said. Since the first great blow delivered by the white man, which took from the Indian his water, game and land and beseiged him with epidemics of disease and with poverty, the Indian has not been disappearing with any great rapidity. The foregoing sketches have shown that there are several hundred Indians left along the Sierra foothills. Most of these are not full-bloods and, of course, many are not Yokuts.

It is true that the dissipating type of Indian is disappearing, in fact he always has been. With few exceptions, the more sober, industrious individuals are surviving. The majority of them are self sustaining and are raising families.

It is believed that several generations will pass before all of the full-blood Yokuts Indians are gone. This is due to two

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things: the fact that they are adjusting themselves to the white man's way of living, and that they are anxious to keep their blood pure.

Those full-blood members of the *Wuckchumne* tribe, who number more than twenty, are almost entirely independent. They have never gone to a reservation and have accepted practically no government aid of any sort. They live in the open air under the spreading oaks along the Kaweah River, much as they always did. This is the reason that they have survived.

One of the common criticisims of Indians is that they are dirty. The writer has interviewed more than two hundred early white pioneers concerning the Yokuts Indians. In addition he has talked to more than twenty Indians who remembered the times before the white man came. We are assured by all persons who knew the Indians before their old method of living was entirely broken up, that almost without exception, every man, woman and child in an Indian village had bathed in the nearby stream before or shortly after sunrise every day of the year. We are told that during the summer months, young people, and often grown people, were in the water from ten to forty times during the day.

Padre Francisco Garces, first recorded white man to travel among the Yowlumne Yokuts, thrice took occasion to mention the fact that those Indians were cleanly and bathed often. He wrote about their use of the sweat house: "The hour of entertaining therein is either during the morning, or during the evening. When once the persons are inside, they kindle a fire; and as there is little ventilation, they cease not with the heat and the smoke to cry out and to sweat until the earth grows wet; when indeed they can endure no more they climb out by means of their ladder of sticks and throw themselves into the river. This is without doubt the cause of these people being so clean; but though of good habit of body they are meager and quite tender footed." On White River Garces wrote: "—these Indians travel little, because they bathe much, and do not have any covering on the feet."

If the many statements concerning these practices are true, then at least the question of personal cleanliness among the Indians as compared to white settlers is settled, because this frequency of bathing is without question not true of the white people who overthrew them. We know that even the mythical universal Saturday night bath was not indulged in by some

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

early settlers. Even Padre Garces mentioned bathing himself only once and that was when he crossed Kern River. He wrote on May 1st, 1776: "They [the Indians] convoyed me across between four of them by swimming, two taking me by the arms, and the other two by the body; whereupon I took advantage of the occasion to bathe at my pleasure in that water so limpid and beautiful."

No person who did not see the Yokuts Indians before 1854 or '55 really knows much about their conditions of living before they were turned out of practically every one of their old village sites.

It appears to me no more unfair to steal a man's money and then to call him a pauper than to drive an Indian from the means of keeping himself presentable and then to call him dirty.

According to repeated testimony, the old Yokuts were true to each other, provident, kind to their families, honest to a fault, temperate, and good citizens within their social group. For some reason I have always felt that if they fulfilled these requirements, a moratorium might be in order regarding the matter of the Saturday night bath. It is proper to record here in support of these last statements that while on Kern River Padre Garces wrote on May 1st, 1776: "The young men are fine fellows, and the women very comely and clean, bathing themselves every little while; they take great care of their hair and do it up in a topknot; they wear petticoats of antelope skin and mantas of fur, though they are not very coy."

This is Garces' third mention of bathing by Yokuts.

At another rancheria in the same locality he wrote on May 2nd: "In this rancheria I found that the little damsels went naked; and though in other parts the same occurred among the women grown, I have not seen in them all an immodest action."

At the present time it is probable that the Indian is receiving the best treatment he has ever receivd at the hands of our government. It is possible that the next few years are to bring even better treatment than they are now receiving. This is a matter of great satisfaction to those white persons who have lived in close contact with the Indians and who have recognized their fine qualities, but it needs some explanation to be appreciated by others.

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the life-for-a-life rule was the nearest approach to a definite law, and this was applied only when the opinion of chiefs and elders saw its justification. By what means, then, were peace and public satisfaction maintained? Largely by means of an influence which had no legal basis, the fear of sorcery. This factor in civil life worked for public good; it was an awe-inspiring force itself, and served as a tool for chiefs when used by them through their shamans. The fear of sorcery operated between any one individual and another. If, as we have said, the peace of a community depended largely upon the personal character of each person, the personal character in turn was determined or molded by belief in supernatural powers which could be turned against one. A man dared not cheat another at gambling or trading, commit adultery, or neglect any civil or ceremonial duty toward his neighbor, lest the offended person visit sickness or death upon him or some member of his family, either by his own power or that of a shaman hired for the purpose. On the other hand, a man could not take offense for no reason, and retaliate by this means unless completely justified, for the matter would eventually be aired before the chief. Thus sorcery as a deterrent of crime kept a balance of peace in everyday life.

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This seems to leave shamans holding the whip hand. One tends to envisage the life of Yokuts and Western Mono as shadowed by the constant threat of witchcraft. It was; but this does not mean that an individual lived in a perpetual state of anxiety and dread. The idea of malevolent sorcery was a commonplace in their lives: one took care not to bring its force down upon oneself. But their attitude to it may be likened to our own to, say, bacteria, automobiles, or gas, dangers to which we are so accustomed that they are given little conscious thought though they unquestionably modify our behavior. And shamanism in native life was no less a necessity than these useful hazards of our own civilization. A doctor might be able to kill one, but at the same time he had the ability to cure sicknesses brought about by other agents such as Night, Springs, ghosts, or other supernatural creatures. It was hard to give up money, baskets, or a prized possession to him, but it was harder still to be sick unto death. And the majority of doctors were not malicious. It is only of bad shamans that informants tell their tragic tales, and these men were of course blamed for many misfortunes for which they were not responsible. A good shaman who found that his patient was not recovering would frankly say he had not the power, and suggest that another be called.

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If he met with one or two failures he gave up his practice entirely, or at least until he had strengthened his contact with the supernatural. Such a man was free of suspicion. The doctor who continued to cure after losing patients was the one to be feared for he was causing illness just to make money in curing, without regard for public welfare. But the doctor whose avidity led him to such extremes was done away with on slight evidence; he had but a tenuous hold on life. Hence the men who were willing to risk their lives in this manner for personal aggrandizement were more rare than informants' accounts would lead us to think. To sum up, shamanism as a factor in political life acted as a deterrent upon crime, was a force which preserved as well as destroyed life, and its misuse was restrained by the threat of discovery and subsequent death.

Turning to the intrigues of chiefs and shamans, it will be seen that there was some justification for the alliance. A chief who hired a shaman to sicken a rich man who did not join in the expenses of a fandango or mourning ceremony was setting a public example at the same time that he was enriching himself. To the chief and to his shaman, who shared the money paid in fees by the sick man, it was unquestionably a matter of financial profit. But from the point of view of the public at large it was a fair punishment. Thus: a man of money who neglected or refused to bear his share of a public expense was placing a heavier financial burden upon his fellow-citizens; furthermore, generosity was an ideal, and the man who failed to contribute his share was showing himself to be greedy, and hence received no sympathy if misfortune befell him. In the absence of any law or system of taxation, it behooved each citizen, especially those of wealth, to participate in the sharing of public expenses, lest he incur the displeasure of the chief and of the public, and sickness or death be visited upon him.

The chief, however, in his turn could not unrestrainedly make use of malevolent supernatural power. He was a public figure, and as such was open to censure. Though his position was acquired by inheritance, his retention of it depended upon his conduct. Simple as was the civilization of Yokuts and Western Mono, upon the chief, as official executor, devolved all manner of responsibilities—and these were not easy. Take for example, the management of a mourning ceremony in which the chief's own village, other villages, and even other tribes were involved. The financial resources of all persons concerned had to be determined, and the intertribal exchange of

7:Powers J-5 (1871-1876) 1877 NS29 Yokuts NS29

ers, four of them caper around like clowns in a circus, chasing each other, chanting, brandishing rattlesnakes in their hands, twining them about their arms, and suffering them to bite their hands. It is supposed that they have either plucked their fangs, or have not allowed them to drink any water for a number of days beforehand, which is said to render them harmless. But the credulous savages believe them invulnerable, and they eagerly press forward with their offerings, in return for which the wizards give them complete immunity from snake-bites for the space of a year. The younger Indians, somewhat indoctrinated in American ideas, have become sadly skeptical and heretical in regard of these dances, which they contemptuously term "skunk meetings", to the great scandal of their pious elders.

Formerly the step danced by the men on most occasions might not inappropriately be called the piston-rod dance, as they seemed intent on driving their legs alternately into the earth. Of late they have adopted from the Mono the grand walk-round, in a single circle, men and women together, and with an entirely different and less violent step.

Although they have a form of war-dance, and the Chukchansi warred a great deal with the Pohonichi of old, as a race they are peaceful, and they take no scalps. But of late years, under the aggravation of aggressions by white men, they have adopted from the warlike Mono the red paint (instead of black), which has so terrible a significance in a savage dance, and the appearance of which always makes the frontiersmen uneasy. From them, also, they have learned to talk of war, to bluster, to threaten darkly, to hold secret conclaves far within the depths of the mountains, from which the whites were rigidly excluded. But nothing has come of them. These things are foreign to the peaceful Yokuts, and the Monos, though they are supposed to have attempted it many times, have never succeeded in screwing their neighbors' courage up to the sticking-point of joining them in a war on the whites.

Nowadays $20 or $30 in gold is paid for a wife, but this only for a virgin. For a widow or a maid suspected of unchastity no man will pay anything or make any presents; and it is due to the Yokuts to state that a pioneer who has lived among them twenty-one years affirms that before the arrival of the Americans they were comparatively virtuous. Dr. E. B. Bate-

7:Powers J-5 (1871-1876) 1877 NS29 Yokuts NS29

man, physician to the Tule River Reservation, gives me the information that both males and females, though bathing quite apart, never enter the water without wearing breech-cloths at least; and this is corroborated by an old resident on King's River, who observed it of them in their native condition. Mr. Charles Maltby, agent of the above reservation, and at one time Indian agent for the whole State, and well acquainted with aboriginal habits, also affirms that the Yokuts are purer than the northern tribes, and that the Indians throughout Southern California are less given to the infamous practice of selling the virtue of their women to white men than those of Northern California. They may not have been any better originally, but they have not been so shamefully debauched by miners. That is probably the explanation.

Their language has what is generally considered a good indication, separate words for "woman" (*mo-kel'-la*), and wife (*mo-ki'*); also, for "man" (*no'-no*) and "husband" (*lo'-wit*).

We find also the singular custom noticed in some other tribes, that a man marrying goes to live at his wife's or father-in-law's house, though he still has power of life or death over her person.

Infanticide is practiced in case of deformity.

Many years ago the Indians dwelling on the lake at the mouth of King's River were carried away captives by the Spaniards, and taken to San Luis Obispo. After a long residence there, upon the breaking up of the missions, they returned to their native land; but meantime a new generation had grown up, to whom the old mission was their home. They yearned to return, and to this day they make an annual pilgrimage to San Luis, where they remain a month; and they would by preference live there all their remaining days, only their children, born on the shores of Tulare Lake, will not consent. By some this may be considered a convincing proof of their attachment to the old Jesuit padres, who used to lasso them in the name of the church; but it is not necessary to resort to this explanation at all. It is easily enough accounted for by the California Indian's proverbial love of his birthplace, just as the slave-born children of Israel lusted for the flesh-pots of that Egypt which had scourged them.

If an Indian dies on a trail far from home he is buried beside it. Every